

Agape Love

The love of God is called the agape love. It is an unconditional love a love by choice and by an act of the will. The word denotes unconquerable benevolence and undefeatable good will. Agape will never seek anything but the highest good for fellow mankind. Agapao (the verb) and agape (the noun) are the words for God's unconditional love. It does not need a chemistry, an affinity, or feeling. Agapao is a word that exclusively belongs to the Christian community. It is a love virtually unknown to writers outside the New Testament.

This divine love was clearly demonstrated at Calvary when Jesus died for all our sins. (John 3:16). This love is a changeless love.

The human love is called phileo, a love that changes very often. e.g. humans love today and hate tomorrow.

Jesus asked Peter thrice if he had agape love. He answered with phileo; which at that moment was all he had to give (John 21:15-17).

Later when the Holy Spirit imparted to him the fuller understanding of agape love, Peter used the agape/agapao words nine times in his writings.

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By Don Krow

There is much confusion today on the subject of love because we are limited to only one English word (love) with a broad range of meanings. For example, if I said, "I love my wife, I love my dog, I love apple pie, " obviously I am not talking about love in the same degree or definition.

In the New Testament period there are four major Greek words that were used.

Eros

A word that was not actually used in the New Testament but was alluded to. It meant sexual passion; arousal, its gratification and fulfilment. The Greek word is probably not used in the New Testament because the origin of the word came from the mythical god Eros, the god of love. It is inferred in many scriptures and is the only kind of love that God restricts to a one-man, one-woman relationship within the bounds of marriage (Heb 13:4; Song of Solomon 1:13; 4:5-6; 7:7-9; 8:10; 1Cor 7:25; Eph 5:31).

Storge

Storge is the natural bond between mother and infant, father, children, and kin. William Barclay states, "We cannot help loving our kith and kin; blood is thicker than water" (N.T. Words, 1974).

Phileo

Phileo love is a love of the affections. It is delighting to be in the presence of another, a warm feeling that comes and goes with intensity. The Bible encourages it but it is never a direct command. God never commands phileo since this type of love is based on the feelings. God Himself did not phileo the world but rather operated in agape love towards us. I cannot have a warm tender feeling toward an enemy but I can agape love them.

Agape

Agape love is God's kind of love. It is seeking the welfare and betterment of another regardless of how we feel. Agape does not have the primary meaning of feelings or affection. Jesus displayed it when He went to the cross and died for you and me regardless of how He felt. In the gospels Jesus prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt" (Mathew 26:39; Mk 14:36; Luke 22:41-43; John 18:11). Jesus sought the betterment of you and me, regardless of His feelings. Matthew 7:12 states it this way, "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (RSV).

We can agape our enemies regardless of how we feel. If they are hungry, we can feed them; if they thirst we can give them a drink

(Romans 12:20-21). We can choose to seek the betterment and welfare of others regardless of how we feel.

Jesus was the greatest expression of love that ever came into the world, but it is never recorded that He ever said the words, "I love you!" Why? because 95 percent of all love is non-verbal. Jesus did not love with just words but in deeds and truth (1 John 3:18); If your actions contradict your words, what are people going to believe, your words or your actions? Your actions of course. Vine's Expository Dictionary states, "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts" (p. 21).

The following is a description of agape love, also called "charity" in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 13). This paraphrase is based upon research of the Greek and English words and their meanings in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8.

Love Suffereth Long.

God's love has a tolerance for and endures trying situations and persons beyond and average standard. God's love is patient.

Love Is Kind.

God's love is of a friendly nature, generous, hospitable, warm-hearted, and good. God's love is charitable and helpful, showing sympathy and understanding for others. It is considerate, forbearing, tolerant, courteous, and thoughtful, desiring only to promote another's welfare. It is generous, liberal, and beneficial, demonstrating itself in kindly acts.

Love Envieth Not.

God's love does not resent another's good fortune or desire to have what is his. God's love is not jealous and does not deprive another of what he has.

Love Vaunteth Not Itself.

God's love does not boast and brag or abound with self-praise. It is not vain nor proud.

Love Is Not Puffed Up.

God's love is not high-minded or puffed up with pride.

Love Doth Not Behave Itself Unseemly.

God's love does not act, react, function, or perform in a manner; which is in bad taste, improper, or in violation of what is right.

Love Seeketh Not Her Own.

God's love does not demand its own way.

Love Is Not Easily Provoked.

God's love is not easily annoyed or incited to anger or resentment.

Love Thinketh Not Evil.

God's love does not reason about or reflect upon that which causes or constitutes misfortune, suffering, difficulty, or the like. God's love does not ponder upon wickedness.

Love Rejoiceth Not In Iniquity.

God's love feels joyful when right, sincerity, integrity, honesty, and truth prevail.

Love Beareth All Things.

God's love makes it possible to withstand all stress and difficulty. Because God is love, He supports and carries on His own Person whatever is place upon Him. God's love protects, covers, and keeps off anything which threatens the benefits and welfare of another. God's love holds back, refrains, and is tolerant and patient in all circumstances.

Love Believeth All Things.

God's love puts faith in others, believing the best of everyone (without criticising or looking for fault).

Love Hopeth All Things.

God's love persists in hoping, against all odds, in confidence and expectation of fulfilment of that which is promised.

Love Endureth All Things.

God's love causes one to carry on through, despite hardships.

Love Never Faileth.

God's love never proves insufficient in duration or in unsuccessful in effectiveness. Love will never disappoint or prove undependable. God's love goes on forever and will never come to an end.

Are you walking in love and trusting the Holy Spirit's power for the manifestation of this virtue? (Galatians 5:22)

Sin is the transgression of the principles of love. Always let love be your highest aim and your greatest pursuit (1 Corinthians 14:1).